

# Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	vii
<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 Exploring Epicene Pronouns in History</b>	<b>9</b>
Characteristics of the personal pronouns	13
Previous changes: trends throughout history	16
Pronoun acquisition	23
The psychological reality of epicene pronouns	26
What epicenes mean	29
Differences between generic <i>he</i> and singular <i>they</i>	36
Conclusions	42
<b>2 Epicenes in the Twenty-First Century</b>	<b>45</b>
Corpus linguistics: a problematic methodology?	46
The BE06 corpus	49
Singular <i>they</i> and generic <i>he</i> in BE06	50
Comparing <i>they</i> with <i>he</i> in BE06	59
Qualitative antecedent analysis	61
Gender-stereotyped antecedents	69
Conclusions	74
<b>3 Epicenes and Social Movements</b>	<b>76</b>
Contextualising epicene prescriptions	77
Initiating formal prescriptive practice	77
Tracing epicene history	82
The effects of sexual politics	89
Feminism and language	90
Non-sexist language and epicenes	93
Epicenes in education	98
‘Correct’ language in educational handbooks	99
Modern approaches to epicenes	102
Conclusions	110

<b>4 Prescriptions, Standards, and Epicenes</b>	<b>113</b>
Creating The Grammar Corpus	114
Analysing prescriptions	119
Endorsing epicene candidates	120
Avoiding problematic antecedents	124
Social interference?	130
Corpus Comparative Statistical Keywords	131
Keywords in the corpus	134
Conclusions	140
<b>5 Accounting for Epicene Choice</b>	<b>143</b>
The British English epicene	144
Epicenes and language-external forces	149
Explaining epicene reference	154
Notional number and other explanations	155
Homonymy Theory	160
Conclusions	166
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>168</b>
<i>Notes</i>	174
<i>Glossary</i>	175
<i>References</i>	179
<i>Index</i>	190